

When the Breast Feeding Mother Faces Surgery

Facing surgery is a stressful experience for anyone. When the patient is a breast feeding mother who faces possible extended separation from her infant or small child, the emotional pain the mother feels may be as difficult for her as the physical problem requiring the procedure. Interrupting breastfeeding for long periods of time can be equally difficult for the infant and may permanently disrupt continued breastfeeding. Breastfeeding initiation rates are increasing due to the myriad of studies indicating the benefits to both infant and mother. Therefore surgeons and anesthesiologists are encountering more and more women who are breastfeeding and facing surgical procedures.

Unaware of current data about transfer of medications into human milk, clinicians may unnecessarily recommend the discontinuation of breastfeeding for extended periods of time following surgery. Drugs used for general anesthesia are short-acting and do not remain in the mother's system and do not affect her milk. Therefore a breastfeeding mother should be allowed to nurse her baby as soon as she is alert enough to safely handle her child. When analgesics are needed post-operatively, consider medications that are used for women who have had cesarean deliveries.

The following tables provide an overview of commonly used anesthetics and analgesics and their known compatibility with breastfeeding, which can assist the clinician in decision making when faced with a patient who is a breastfeeding mother.

References:

Anesthetic Medications in Breastfeeding Mothers by Thomas Hale, RPh, PhD
Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Profession by Robert M. Lawrence
Breastfeeding and Human Lactation by Jan Riordan and Kathleen G. Auerbach
Medications and Mothers' Milk by Thomas Hale, RPh, PhD
The Breastfeeding Answer Book by La Leche League International

Websites:

www.kellymom.com/health/meds/pain-meds.html
www.kellymom.com/health/meds/anesthetics.html

Info on selected medications used for pain relief				
Name of medication	AAP approved?*	Pregnancy Risk Category**	Lactation Risk Category**	Notes
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Approved	B	L1	
Aspirin	Caution	C (1st, 2nd trim.) D (3rd trim.)	L3	1
Azapropazone (Rheumox)	Approved	-	L2	
Butalbital (Fioricet, Fiorinal, Bancap, Two-dyne)	NR	D	L3	2
Butorphanol (Stadol)	Approved	B (1st, 2nd trim.) D (3rd trim.)	L3	
Celecoxib (Celebrex) (FDA safety info)	NR	C	L2	
Codeine (in Tylenol #3, #4)	Approved	C	L3	3
Colchicine	Approved	D	L4	
Diclofenac (Cataflam, Voltaren)	NR	B	L2	
Fentanyl (Sublimaze)	Approved	B	L2	
Flurbiprofen (Ansaid, Froben, Ocufer)	NR	B (1st, 2nd trim.) C (3rd trim.)	L2	
Hydrocodone (Lortab, Vicodin)	NR	B	L3	4
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	NR	C	L3	5
Ibuprofen (Advil, Nuprin, Motrin, Pediaprofen)	Approved	B (1st, 2nd trim.) D (3rd trim.)	L1	
Indomethacin (Indocin)	Approved	B (1st, 2nd trim.) D (3rd trim.)	L3	
Ketorolac (Toradol, Acular)	Approved	B (1st, 2nd trim.) D (3rd trim.)	L2	
Meperidine (Demerol)	Approved	B	L2; L3 early postpartum	6
Methadone (Dolophine)	Approved	B	L3	7
Morphine (Duramorph, Infumorph, Epimorph, MS Contin)	Approved	B	L3	8
Nalbuphine (Nubain)	NR	B	L2	
Naproxen (Anaprox, Naprosyn, Naproxen, Aleve)	Approved	B	L3; L4 for chronic use	9
Nefopam (Acupan)	Approved	-	NR	
Oxycodone (Tylox, Percodan, Oxycontin, Roxicet, Endocet,	NR	B	L3	10

Roxiprin, Percocet)				
Pentosan polysulfate (Elmiron)	NR	B	L2	
Piroxicam (Feldene)	Approved	B	L2	
Propoxyphene (Darvocet N, Propacet, Darvon)	Approved	C	L2	<u>11</u>
Rofecoxib (Vioxx)	Withdrawn from the market			<u>12</u>
Secobarbital (Seconal)	Approved	D	L3	<u>13</u>
Tolmetin (Tolectin)	Approved	C	L3	
Tramadol HCL (Ultram, Ultracet)	NR	C	L3	<u>14</u>
Valdecoxib (Bextra) (FDA safety info)	Withdrawn from the market			more

* Per the AAP Policy Statement The Transfer of Drugs and Other Chemicals Into Human Milk, revised September 2001.

- **Approved:** (Table 6) Maternal Medication Usually Compatible With Breastfeeding
- **Caution:** (Table 5) Drugs That Have Been Associated With Significant Effects on Some Nursing Infants and Should Be Given to Nursing Mothers With Caution
- **NR:** Not Reviewed. This drug has not yet been reviewed by the AAP.

** Per *Medications' and Mothers' Milk* by Thomas Hale, PhD (2004 edition).

Lactation Risk Categories	Pregnancy Risk Categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L1 (safest) • L2 (safer) • L3 (moderately safe) • L4 (possibly hazardous) • L5 (contraindicated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A (controlled studies show no risk) • B (no evidence of risk in humans) • C (risk cannot be ruled out) • D (positive evidence of risk) • X (contraindicated in pregnancy)
NR: Not Reviewed. This drug has not yet been reviewed by Hale.	

Info on selected anesthetics

Name of medication	AAP approved?*	Pregnancy Risk Category**	Lactation Risk Category**	Notes
Local anesthetics				
Articaine (Septocaine)	NR	-	NR	<u>more</u>
Bupivacaine (Marcaine)	NR	C	L2	
Lidocaine (Xylocaine)	Approved	C	L2	
Mepivacaine (Carbocaine, Polocaine)	NR	C	L3	<u>more</u>
Procaine HCL (Novocaine)	NR	C	L3	
General anesthetics				
Halothane (Fluothane)	Approved	C	L2	<u>more</u>
Isoflurane (Forane)	NR	-	NR	<u>1</u>
Ketamine	NR	-	NR	<u>more</u>
Methohexital (Brevital)	Approved	B	L3	
Nitrous oxide	NR	-	L3	
Sevoflurane (Ultane)	NR	B	L3	
Thiopental (Pentothal)	Approved	C	L3	
Other medications often used during anesthesia				
Sedatives				
Diazepam (Valium)	Concern	D	L3; L4 for chronic use	
Midazolam (Versed)	Concern	D	L3	
Propofol (Diprivan)	NR	B	L2	<u>more</u>
Triazolam (Halcion)	NR	X	L3	
Narcotic Analgesics				
Alfentanil (Alfenta)	NR	C	L2	
Fentanyl (Sublimaze)	Approved	B	L2	
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	NR	C	L3	
Morphine	Approved	B	L3	
Reversal Medication				
Flumazenil (Romazicon)	NR	C	NR	<u>2</u>
Naloxone (Narcan)	NR	C	NR	<u>3</u>
Steroids				
Decadron (Dexamethasone)	NR	C	NR	<u>more</u>
Stimulants				
Epinephrine (Adrenaline)	NR	C	L1	
Anti-nausea				
Promethazine (Phenergan)	NR	C	L2	

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- **Approved:** (Table 6) Maternal Medication Usually Compatible With Breastfeeding
- **Concern:** (Table 4) Drugs for Which the Effect on Nursing Infants Is Unknown but May Be of Concern
- **Caution:** (Table 5) Drugs That Have Been Associated With Significant Effects on Some Nursing Infants and Should Be Given to Nursing Mothers With Caution
- NR: Not Reviewed. This drug has not yet been reviewed by the AAP.

** Per *Medications' and Mothers' Milk* by Thomas Hale, PhD (2004 edition).

Lactation Risk Categories	Pregnancy Risk Categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• L1 (safest)• L2 (safer)• L3 (moderately safe)• L4 (possibly hazardous)• L5 (contraindicated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A (controlled studies show no risk)• B (no evidence of risk in humans)• C (risk cannot be ruled out)• D (positive evidence of risk)• X (contraindicated in pregnancy)
NR: Not Reviewed. This drug has not yet been reviewed by Hale.	